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By the King.

Commission with Instructions, and Directions granted by His Maiestie to the Master and Counsaile of the Court of Wards and Liueries, for compounding for Wards, Ideots and Lunaticks; And giuen vnder His Highnes great Scale of England, The 23. of February 1617.



I AMES by the grace of God King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. To Our right trustie, and right welbeloued Councillour, William Lord Knollys, Viscount Wallingford, Master of Our Court of Wards and Liueries, And to Our trusty and welbeloued the Counsell of the same Court, And to the Master and Councell of the said Court for the time being, Greeting. WHEREAS it doth appeare by comon experience, in the course which hath bin held, sithence the first erection of Our Court of Wards and Liueries, That partly by the slackenes of the friends of the Wards vpon the decease of the parents or Ancestors, who haue forborne to offer timely Composition, sometimes with opinion that no Title could be found for Vs, and sometimes with purpose to suppress the same, and partly by the suite of other men, the Custody of the bodies and lands of Our Wards haue bene committed to such persons, some for one respect, some for another, as (notwithstanding the care and prouidence of you the Master and Councell of Our Court, to binde them in great Bonds and Couenants for the well educating of the Children, and pre-

of their inheritance) haue bene carelesse of their education, married some in meane places, committed waits and spoiles vpon Lands, and in the end haue exacted greater summes of money, for the mariages of such Wards, then they ought to haue done, in and equitie; notwithstanding any their disbursements whatsoever for pasing or procuring the same. And whereas also We haue bene informed by you the Master of the said Court, that by reason of the great difficulties that haue bene by the Court, vpon sight of Offices, and Surueyes onely, to set downe Compositions for Wardships and Leases of Wards lands, and equalitie and moderation betweene Vs, and Our Subiects, as were iust and reasonable; and that through want of due information behalfe, much of the profit that might haue bene raised for Vs, hath bene diuerred to diuers Sutors and Committees, who by the trueth of the Wards estate, and by misinforming of the Court therein, haue reaped greater profit, then was intended, if you by ordinary meanes haue come by the knowledge of their values; so as, both Wee haue receiued lesse then otherwise We should haue, and the Wardes found little ease in many cases.

Therefore, for the preuenting of these and the like inconueniences, and to the end that Our louing Subiects may stand assured, That nothing more, then that their children and their lands that shal fall vnto Vs by reason of Wardships, might after their decease, be committed to their neereft and trustiest friends, or to such as they by VVil, or otherwise, shall commit the charge vnto, vpon such valuations, as are iust and reasonable: And to the intent that the Parents and Ancestours may depart in greater peace, in hope of Our gracious fauour; and their friends may see their children brought vp in pietie and learning; and may take such care as is fit for the education of their inheritance, if they will seeke the same in time, and by such meanes as are fit and conuenient; VVe haue thought fit to require you, the Master and Councell of Our said Court, and the Master and Councell of the said Court for the time being, to keep and committing of the Custody of the bodies and Lands of such our Wards, whose Ancestours haue deceased since last past, or shall die from and after the date of these presents, and of such Ideots and Lunatickes, and their estates, as shal fall vnto vs hereafter, you strictly and carefully obserue these Our Directions following.

FIRST, That no Graunt or promise be made of the custody of the body or lands of any VVard, nor any composition for the same, vntill the end of one moneth next after the death of the Ancestour of the VVard, to the end that the neereft and trustiest friends of the Ancestour, or other persons nominated by the Ancestour in that behalfe, may in the meane time become Sutors for the same, among whom choice may be made of the best and fittest.

ALSO you shall doe by your best endeouours to informe your selfe as particularly as you may, by Commission, suruey, and of the trueth of the Wards estate, as well of his inheritance, as of his goods and chattels, and of the estate of the deceased Ancestour, and of all other due circumstances considerable, to the end the compositions may be such, as may stand both with Our reasonable consideration, and with the abilitie of the heires estate.

AT all sales and compositions for Wardships of the bodies, and Leases of Lands, be made by the Master of the said Court, and by such persons as are authorized by Statute in that behalfe. Neuerthelesse, the Surueyours of the Liueries, the Atturney of the VVards, and Auditors, or any foure of them without the Master, may treat with any to bring the said VVardships and Leases to a price, and acquaint the Councell Chamber of the Court of VVards, and acquaint the Master therewith, in whose power it shal be to allow or disallow the same according to the said Statute.

AT no VVardships of the body or land shalbe giuen or granted to any person, or at his suite, in way of reward or benefit, but the value that shal be offered, shalbe taken to Our vse; so, alwayes as the neereft and trustiest friends, or the persons nominated by the Ancestour, (they seeking the same in time conuenient, as aforesaid, and making fit offer for it) be preferred, and consideration had of the best Estate, and of all due circumstances considerable in such cases.

AT Leases of Wards Lands be made without Fine, for the best improoued yeerely Rent that shal be offered, consideration being had of all due Cautions, as aforesaid.

AT sellable Woods, and Fines of Copy-holds of Inheritance, be also reasonably valued and demised with the Lands, for the best Rent as aforesaid; with prouision for sellable Woods. That the Lessees sell them by fir portions.

AT Fines of Copy-holds for Liues, bee made and raised to Our vse, when and as often as the Court shal thinke good, by certain Commissioners to be appointed by the Master and Councell of Our said Court, which Commissioners shal be charged to see the best of such Copy-holds to be granted, and truly to answere vnto Vs into Our receipt of Our sayd Court, all such summes, and couine, as by them shal haue bene receiued, due consideration being had of their paines and expences.

AT all Petitions for Compositions of Wardships (and Leases) bee presented and ordered at the Councell Chamber of the Court of Wards, at the seuerall sittings for the Wards.

AT every such Petition doe expresse the seuerall Counties wherein the Ancestour died seized of Lands.

AT the rate and summe agreed vpon by the Commissioners for the Composition of any VVard (or Lease) doe stand and bee in the Composition, neither in the Fine nor Rent.

AT no Office be found within the yere after the death of the Ancestour against Vs, or a meane tenure of Vs, (not being Knights seruice) Ward within age, vntill the Feodary or Escheator doe first acquaint the Court for further directions therein (which the Court shall doe with all conuenient expedition.)

AT not onely euery Committee (and Lessee) but euery Assignee of euery Committee (or Lessee) shall take the Oath, viz. &c. that he will faithfully execute the Office of Committee (and Lessee) and Assignee shall be sworn, whether he taketh it to his owne vse, or to the vse of another, and they may both take the Oath.

AT speciall choise bee taken of the Commissioners, that take the Oath in the Countrey, so that the Oath may bee truly and faithfully executed by the Committees (Lessees) and Assignees and the parties committing trust to any other.

AT every Feodary and Escheator before the third returne of euery Tearme, shall certifie into the Court a note of all Offices committed to him next before, and whether a Tenure bee found for Vs in Capite, or by Knights seruice, and the names of the Ancestours, and his age.

AT the Oath be taken by those that are Committees or Lessees vpon neglect, in *hac verba*.